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***Lt. Governor Meets with Costa Rican Officials Regarding CAFTA***

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA – The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) took center stage in Tuesday's agricultural delegation meetings with government officials in Costa Rica. Lt. Governor Becky Skillman and Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., are leading the first trade mission to Central America since the U.S. Congress ratified CAFTA. Costa Rica's legislature is now debating CAFTA ratification.

Lt. Governor Skillman, Rep. Burton and Indiana Agriculture Director Andy Miller met with Costa Rica's Minister of Agriculture Rodolfo Coto and Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Doris Osterloff. The meetings focused on the mutual benefits of the agreement to Costa Rica and Indiana, which produce complimentary agricultural goods. Costa Rica exports fruits, such as melons and pineapples, coffee and nursery crops. Indiana's strengths are in corn, soybeans, pork and value-added food like bacon and canned tomatoes.

"We understand there are issues Costa Rica must resolve in order to ratify and implement CAFTA," said Lt. Governor Skillman. "I believe that Costa Rica's ratification of CAFTA would be mutually beneficial to both countries, and I think the majority of Costa Rican consumers would be pleased with the products they would see from the Indiana."

While Lt. Governor Skillman and Congressman Burton met with the Costa Rican governmental officials, the remainder of the Indiana delegation visited supermarkets in Guatemala to learn more about marketing their products in Central America.

Eric Gloe, Vice President for Sales and Marketing for Terre Haute-based Clabber Girl, found possible wholesale and retail opportunities for his company and its baking products in Guatemala. Clabber Girl makes baking powder, baking soda and cornstarch, among other things. In meetings with two large bakery chains, both companies expressed frustration with their current baking powders and were impressed with the consistent quality Clabber Girl could offer. The companies requested product samples to test. One will begin working with a Clabber Girl scientist to determine how to resolve issues they are having with their baking powder. Gloe has scheduled follow-up visits for February, because of the contacts he has made during the trade mission.

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